



Fern , 1942

WAGL / WLR-304

Any of numerous flowerless, seedless vascular plants having roots, stems, and fronds and reproducing by spores.

Builder: Peterson & Haecker Ltd., Blair, Nebraska

Commissioned: 19 November 1942

Decommissioned: 1 September 1971

Length: 114' 6"

Beam: 31'

Draft: 8' 3"

Displacement: 440 tons

Propulsion: 3 Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines; 960 BHP; triple propellers

Performance:

Max: 10.7 knots

Economic: 9.5 knots; 3,800 mile range

Deck Gear:

Complement: 23

Armament: None

Electronics: None

HISTORY:

In May 1942 the Coast Guard engineering division was ordered to outline a contract for an icebreaking river tender to be in service on the upper Mississippi River complex by the end of the year. The *Fern's* final design and the design of her "Amsterdam" ice plow were executed by Peterson & Haecker, Ltd., of Blair, Nebraska. *Fern* was contracted within two weeks and delivered in November before the freeze-up. She was patterned on a conventional river towboat. Icebreaking was achieved by means of a detachable Amsterdam-type ice plow that was attached to her bow. *Fern* normally employed a barge, usually CGB-36. *Fern* was assigned to Burlington, Iowa as of 1 November 1944 and was assigned to service river aids to navigation, conduct search and rescue, and break ice when called upon. From 1 December 1945 until 9 September 1947 she was stationed at St. Louis, Missouri. From 10 September 1947 until 25 February 1952 she was stationed at Cincinnati, Ohio. From 26 February 1952 until 1 September 1971 she was stationed at Dubuque, Iowa. In late April of 1965 she assisted with flood relief near LaCrosse, Wisconsin. She was decommissioned on 1 September 1971 and was sold, along with her ice plow, on 19 June 1971.

SOURCES:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Washington, DC: USGPO.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft, 1946-1990*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990.
